



Northgate Framework Resolution
Advice #8

Date: September 9, 2005

To: Mayor Greg Nickels and Members of the Seattle City Council

From: Ron LaFayette, Chair, and Michelle Rupp, Vice-Chair, on Behalf of the Northgate Stakeholders Group

Subject: STAKEHOLDERS ADVICE #8 CONCERNING EVALUATION CRITERIA
FOR THE COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT PLAN
(CTIP)

The resolution establishing the Northgate Stakeholders Group assigned the Stakeholders the task of reviewing and commenting upon the proposed Coordinated Transportation Improvement Plan (CTIP), the process through which the City will determine future transportation investments in the Northgate area. This Advice expands upon previous Stakeholder comments on the CTIP Planning Process (Advice #3, June 24, 2004) and on Planning, Financing and Technical Assistance Assumptions. (Advice #5, February 24, 2005) At a later stage, Stakeholders will provide further review of CTIP project priorities and implementation strategies.

SDOT planners and consultants have responded positively to all Stakeholder recommendations regarding Evaluation Criteria in their draft of June 7, 2005. Therefore the Stakeholder Group endorses the full utilization of these Evaluation Criteria in all further stages of the CTIP process.

The Review Process:

The Stakeholders Group reviewed SDOT's development of CTIP Planning, Financing and Technical Assumptions through several meetings between the Stakeholders CTIP Subcommittee, SDOT Project Manager Tony Mazzella, and consultants from Mirai Associates. Evaluation criteria draft were presented and discussed on March 22, April 26 and May 25. At each stage, Stakeholders provided counsel not only on the nature of the criteria but on issues related to the method of their application. The Subcommittee reported the progress of these discussions at the Stakeholders meeting on April 26.

On June 7, Tony Mazzella of SDOT provided a final draft responding to all Subcommittee concerns. In addition, he provided a memo detailing the differences between the draft CTIP Evaluation Criteria and the evaluation process developed for Seattle's Capital Improvement Program. After receipt and review of the draft and accompanying memo, the Stakeholders approved the Advice on Evaluation Criteria at their July 12 meeting, with 15 members in support and one member opposed. This member's minority opinion follows the advice.

Critical Elements of the Evaluation Criteria:

The CTIP Evaluation Criteria utilize a weighing system to determine the impact of proposed projects in the CTIP study area. As the Evaluation Criteria draft explains, these criteria include:

1. Safety
2. Neighborhood livability
3. Pedestrian mobility
4. Bicycling mobility
5. Transit rider mobility
6. Auto driver mobility
7. Cost-effectiveness and implementation feasibility
8. Housing and economic development
9. Infrastructure preservation/maintenance
10. Environmental sustainability

These criteria differ from those used in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in three critical ways.

- The CTIP Evaluation Criteria does not incorporate the Comprehensive Plan/ Urban Village land use strategy criteria, since the CTIP assumes that all potential improvements identified through the CTIP process would support this CIP criterion.
- The CTIP process adds a specific criteria for Neighborhood Livability, based upon such objectives as a) reduce excessive through-traffic volumes on residential streets; b) minimize increased traffic volumes on adjacent streets as a result of any action that is proposed; c) keep vehicle speeds at 25 mph or less on residential streets, and d) reduce risks of pedestrian and bicycle collisions with vehicles on arterials and residential streets.
- The CTIP Evaluation Criteria separates the mobility category among the transportation modes: auto, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit. The CIP evaluates mobility overall.

Minority Report

This Minority Report is submitted in response to the concerns expressed at the July, 2005 Stakeholder's Meeting with regard to the percentages assigned to various design elements identified by the Transportation Sub-Committee. Rather than relegating 5% of the design considerations to environmental factors, we believe it is appropriate to remove this percentage designation and instead, assess all built structures globally in terms of their net improvement or negative impact upon the Northgate environment.

In many citizen forums over the years, it has been repeatedly acknowledged that Northgate can be developed in a win-win fashion. That is, development can be designed which reflects the community's strong environmental values, and still yield economic return to the property owners. The same philosophy should be applied to the City's own developments or redevelopments at Northgate.

What we propose, rather than a “wink” at environmental sensitivity, is for each new project to be rated in terms of it’s relative improvement to the environment. For example, when sidewalks are expanded or improved, there is a better pedestrian environment created. The encouragement to navigate the Northgate area on foot will result in fewer car trips for errands or destinations which can be linked in a more attractive and usable sidewalk system. The same can be said of drainage designs which incorporate the natural systems or enhance the environment for plants, animals and people alike. The Lorig development for the South Lot is the best example of this approach. As new developments come on line, or are evaluated for permitting, it would be better to make an effort to invite the respective developers to state HOW their proposal benefits the environment, rather than to give them the message that they need only make a 5% effort on environmental protection measures.

The benefit to this approach would be to encourage maximum environmental consciousness, and greater aggregate gains than we will see if every project is just relegated to the “groan - OK, how do we target the 5%” mentality.

We also believe that “Sustainability” applies to all the categories and one could easily make a logical point that the environment applies to every area and should be an overlying responsibility for all developments or project, not just an afterthought. For example considering the overall impact to our area from the high price of fuel (including new impacts from Hurricane Katrina), for instance, thought should be given to how each project proposes to operate efficiently. There are many areas that could be equally evaluated by the City when permitting or planning is done for the Northgate neighborhoods.

Janet Way, Thornton Creek Legal Defense Fund Representative, and Jan Brucker, Alternate